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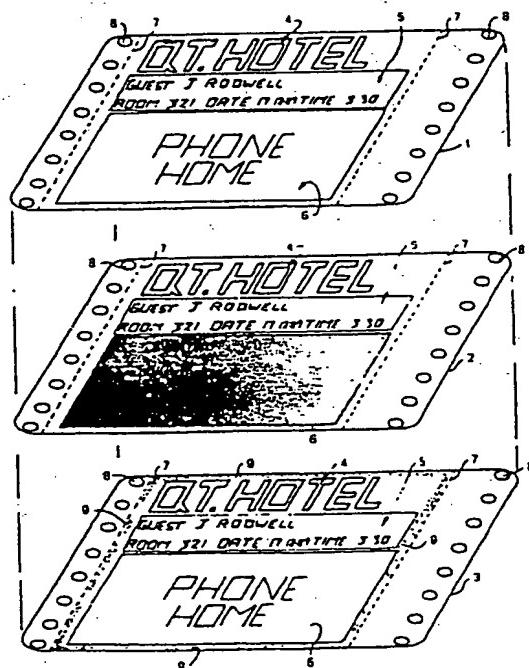
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(54) Confidential message envelope

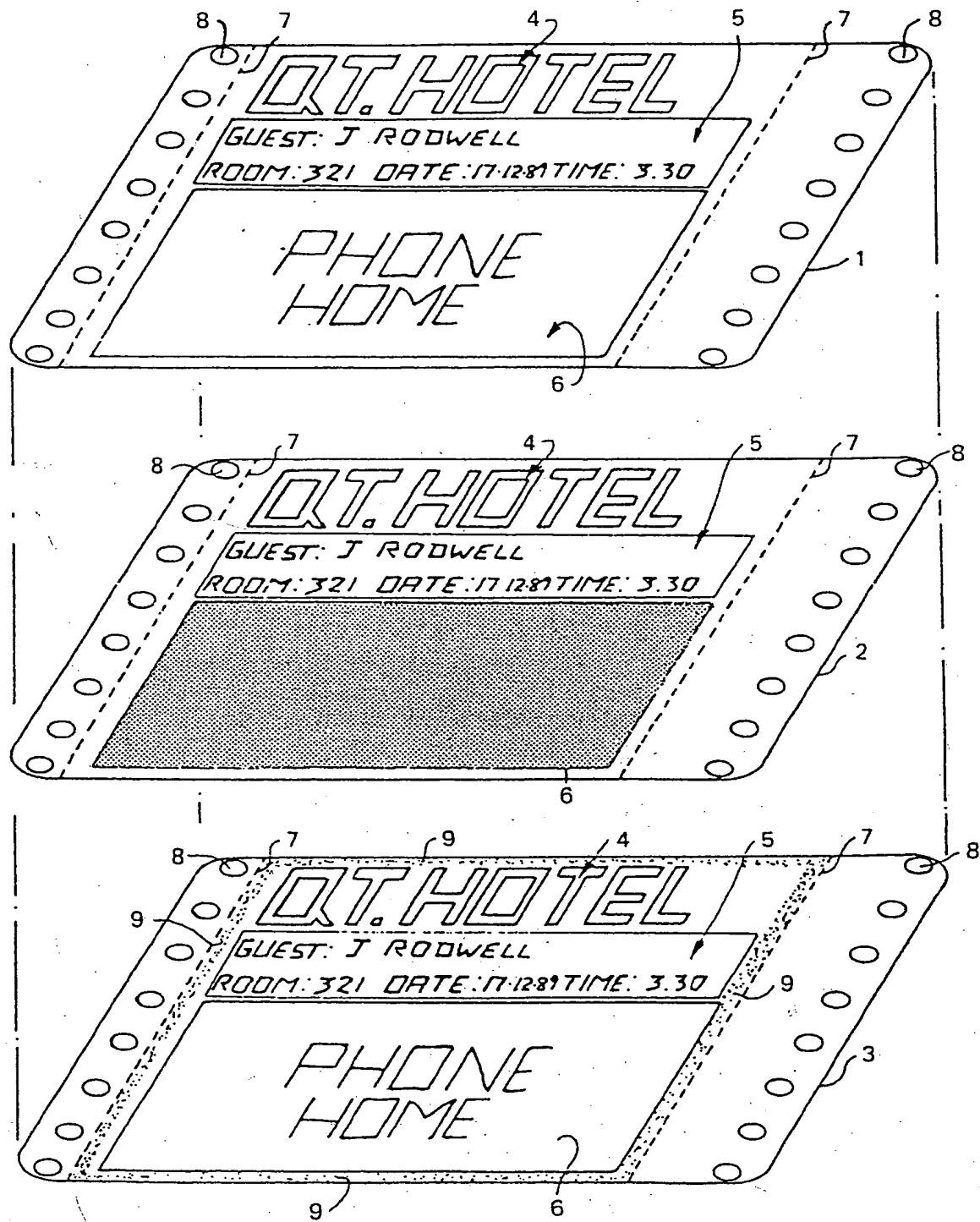
(57) An envelope upon which a message may be written comprises three sheets (1, 2, 3) disposed one above the other, the middle and back sheets (2, 3) being joined together in releasably sealed manner to define an inner envelope, the front sheet (1) being releasably joined to the inner envelope. The middle sheet (2) includes a layer of ink or like marking material on its reverse side, whereby a message written onto the front sheet (1) is applied to the uppermost face of the back sheet (3) but not to the uppermost face of the middle sheet, the envelope being arranged so that the front sheet may then be detached, while the inner envelope is given to the intended recipient of the message who then unseals the middle sheet from the back sheet to reveal the message.



At least one drawing originally filed was informal and the print reproduced here is taken from a later filed formal copy.
The claims were filed later than the filing date within the period prescribed by Rule 25(1) of the Patents Rules 1990.

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TAMPER EVIDENT ENVELOPE

This invention relates to an envelope within which a private message may be written. Such an envelope may be used, for example, within a hotel or office for passing a telephone message on to a person at the hotel or office.

It is usual for telephone and other short messages to be written upon a sheet of paper and left e.g. in a pigeon hole for the intended recipient. If the message is of a confidential or potentially embarrassing nature, it is undesirable for the message to be left on full view where any passer by can read it. It is, of course, possible to fold up, staple or otherwise attach the sheet of paper to itself, or place the paper in a sealable envelope but this is not always reliable.

It is an object of the invention to provide a sealed envelope which can contain a private message which avoids the aforementioned problems, and which is reliable and easy to use.

According to a first aspect of the invention there is provided an envelope upon which a message may be written, comprising three sheets of paper or the like disposed one above the other, the

middle and back sheets being joined together in releasably sealed manner to define an inner envelope, the front sheet being releasably joined to the inner envelope, the middle sheet including a layer of ink or like marking material on its reverse side, whereby a message written onto the front sheet is applied to the uppermost face of the back sheet but not to the uppermost face of the middle sheet, the envelope being arranged so that the front sheet may then be detached, while the inner envelope is given to the intended recipient of the message who then unseals the middle sheet from the back sheet to reveal the message.

Preferably the portion of the middle sheet intended to overlie the message is darkened so as to further conceal the underlying message. Also preferably the front sheet includes an inked portion on its reverse side so that certain information, e.g. the name of the intended recipient of the message, written on the front sheet will be applied to the middle sheet as well.

In order that the invention may be better understood it will now be described by way of example only with reference to the accompanying diagrammatic drawing in which Figure 1 is an exploded perspective view of an envelope according to the invention.

As shown in the drawing, an envelope according to the invention

comprises a stack of three sheets of paper or the like 1, 2, 3. As shown, the envelope is for use in a hotel and includes a heading 4 at the top of each sheet indicating the name of the hotel. Beneath the heading is a portion 5 including instructions and spaces where the name of the intended recipient, his room number and the date and time that the message was taken may be written. Beneath that is a blocked area or portion 6 where the message may be written. The front sheet 1 includes an inked portion on the reverse side underlying the instruction portion 5, so that the name of the recipient and the other details may be applied to the middle sheet 2. The reverse side of front sheet 1 beneath portion 6 is free of ink. The entire reverse side of the middle sheet 2 is inked, so that any message applied to the front sheet 1 is simultaneously applied to the uppermost face of the bottom sheet 3, but not to the ink free areas of the middle sheet.

All three sheets, 1, 2, 3 include a line of perforations 7 adjacent two opposing sides thereof. A parallel line of holes 8 is present beyond each perforated line 7, e.g so that a reel of such envelopes joined end-to-end (not shown) may be dispensed by a computer printer, the sprockets of the printer wheel engaging the holes 8. One side of the tearstrip, the right hand side as shown, is wider than the other.

The middle 2 and back sheets 3 define an inner envelope and are

joined together by lines of adhesive or glue 9 on all four sides. The glue line 9 on the right hand side of sheet 3, as shown, is disposed in parallel between the perforated line 7 and the line of holes 8. The front sheet 1 is releasably attached to the underlying envelope.

In use, the person taking the message writes the details of the intended recipient in box 5 of the front sheet 1 which details are applied to the two underlying sheets 2, 3. He can then write the message, e.g "phone home" in box 6. This is transferred to the back sheet 3, but not to the middle sheet 2. He then detaches the front sheet 1 and leaves the underlying sealed inner envelope 2, 3 for the recipient. This provides an envelope on which is exposed the recipients name but not the message. The front sheet 1 is then filed away or discarded.

When the recipient receives the message he is certain that no one else has read the message, because the darkened area 6 on the middle sheet 2 conceals the underlying message, and any evidence that the inner envelope has been tampered with is immediately obvious. He opens the inner envelope by tearing the right hand side portion of envelope along the perforated line 7, which thereby removes one line of adhesive and which thereby unseals the inner envelope. He then detaches the middle sheet 2 from the back sheet 3 to read the message on the back sheet.

CLAIMS

1. An envelope upon which a message may be written, comprising three sheets of paper or the like disposed one above the other, the middle and back sheets being joined together in releasably sealed manner to define an inner envelope, the front sheet being releasably joined to the inner envelope, the middle sheet including a layer of ink or like marking material on its reverse side, whereby a message written onto the front sheet is applied to the uppermost face of the back sheet but not to the uppermost face of the middle sheet, the envelope being arranged so that the front sheet may then be detached, while the inner envelope is given to the intended recipient of the message who then unseals the middle sheet from the back sheet to reveal the message.
2. An envelope according to Claim 1, characterised in that the portion of the middle sheet intended to overlie the message is darkened so as to further conceal the underlying message.
3. An envelope according to claim 1 or Claim 2, characterised in that the front sheet includes an inked portion on its reverse side so that certain information such as the name of the intended recipient of the message written on the front sheet will be applied to the middle sheet as well.

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4. An envelope substantially as described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

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